

Mints Anyone?

Based on a note from Edwin A. Locke (#3281)

“Mint perfin stamps are rarely mentioned in articles related to perfined stamps. I have two sheets of Canadian air mail stamps – perfined – mint condition. I purchased a collection about ten years ago; these were among many sheets of U. S. stamps. You can imagine my delight to find these two sheets. They added a new dimension to my collection.

Are perfined stamps collected only as used stamps?”

To begin a first response to Edwin’s question I wish to say Congratulations on your find! I suspect that there are not many full mint sheets of perfined stamps on older issues still in collector’s hands. This fact alone may go a long way to explaining why not a lot is written about mint perfins.

Mint perfins are available for many patterns as single stamps or even in the form of multiples still attached. I don’t know of any collector of perfins who would leave a hole in his or her collection if the only copy of a pattern available was a mint one. And, undoubtedly, there are a couple of collectors with a specialized collection of mint perfined stamps.

I have a mint set of the five Perfins Club patterns (P80.1P => P80.5P) in my US perfins collection. I also have them canceled on one cover – the first day

of use cover. But, even in my stock material, I don’t have any of the five canceled. And these stamps are not on my want list. Being mint neither adds nor detracts from their collectability as far as I am concerned.

While most collectors of perfins neither search out nor discriminate against mint perfined items, many (if my mail is any indication) find the lesser value patterns, those rated D, E, or F, to be very interesting additions to fill out the necessary franking of current correspondence. My suspicion is that those who use perfins to frank modern mail are corresponding with other perfin collectors who enjoy the gesture, but it indicates a relatively low premium given to mint vs. used when perfins are collected. These observations may go a long way towards explaining why there is little written separating mint and used perfined stamps.

One thing to remember – if mint perfined stamps make it into the marketplace, they are either favor punches or failed security devices on pilfered company property. One possible explanation for their legitimate existence as mint postage is that they were part of the assets of a failed company sold to recover monies against company debts. Anyone have any other explanations for the existence of mint perfins in the marketplace rather than in the company mailroom?

All this having been said, I return to my first impression - full mint sheets of perfinned stamps are probably relatively uncommon. Whether or not they

carry any financial premium, they are certainly a fine addition to anyone's collection of perfins.